THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. The domestic passenger growth has declined to negative 5.1% during the year 2008 as compare to growth of 46.5% and 32.5% in the full calendar year 2006 and 2007 respectively.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is being examined.

Determination of flight path of aircrafts

124. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is mandatory for aircrafts, when airborne, to fly only along the flight - path/altitude pre-determined or as per Air Traffic Controller (ATC)'s direction;

(b) if so, the salient features of the mechanism available with the authorities for monitoring the flight-path being cruised by each domestic and international aircrafts in the respective regions of the country;

(c) the steps taken reflecting to detection of deviation from the pre-charted route whenever resorted to by any aircraft, indicating the possible time-gap between such detection and reflective action;

(d) the past instances of occurrence of such flight-path deviations; and

(e) the actions taken in respective instances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Aircraft fight path is monitored with the help of radars, ADS(C) and position reports given by aircraft through VHF or HF in the area of non-radar coverage.

(c) to (e) Whenever deviation is unavoidable due to bad weather conditions, especially during monsoon Reason, or any other compelling reasons from the safe aircraft operations point of view, the aircraft normally request ATC for such deviation indicating the extent of time/ distance, which is authorized by ATC immediately after sorting out the other conflicting traffic. The aircraft regains original flight path as soon as it is clear of bad weather or any other compelling circumstances and report to ATC. Such situations are handle in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures of ICAO.

Delay in air services

125. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the frequent delay in landing and take off of aircrafts in the country; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The primary reasons for delay in landing and operation of aircraft are:

1. The airlines are not able to maintain their schedule due to operational/ commercial/ technical reason, 2. Bunching of flights, 3. Weather below minimum, 4. Weather phenomenon like thunderstorm, dust storm, fog, heavy rains etc. 5. Delayed flights have cumulative effects on subsequent flights, 6. Preference of airlines to operate during prime time.

(b) Following steps have been taken to improve the situation:

Construction of new high speed exit taxi-ways, establishment of Clearance Delivery Position and ATC Automation System at Delhi and Mumbai airports; construction of third runway at Delhi airport, parallel taxi track and installation of Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (ASMGCS) at Delhi airport; simultaneous use of runways at Delhi and Mumbai airports; beginning of runways 32 and 27 have been joined by constructing new taxi track at Mumbai airport to reduce runway occupancy time; improved ATC procedures have been framed; upgradation of Kolkata airport to CAT II ILS; at the time of slot allocation schedule arrival and departure time are spread to avoid bunching; freezing of number of hourly movements of flights at Mumbai and Delhi airports and imposition of ban on general aviation aircraft during peak period at Mumbai airport.

Easing of investment rules in aviation sector

126. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private carriers are advocating easing of investment rules to allow their foreign peers to pick stake in domestic carriers;

(b) if so, whether the Air India has strongly opposed of such move;

(c) if so, whether Government has undertaken comprehensive review of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in airlines;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of Government on the move of the Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No such representation received from the Air India on change in FDI policy.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is at preliminarily stage.

(e) Does not arise.

Foreign stakes in domestic airlines

127. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any panel to look into foreign airlines stake proposal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would allow to pick up 25 per cent stake in domestic market; and